

Proposal Title	Support to the Thomas Paine Initiative (TPI) to Prevent the United Kingdom from Leaving the European Convention on Human Rights and Build Support for Human Rights in the UK
Reserve Fund	European Reserve Fund
Collaborating Programs	The Open Society Initiative for Europe, the Human Rights Initiative, the Open Society European Policy Institute and the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSIFE, HRI, OSEPI and OSJI).
Approver	Jordi Vaquer
Date Approved	5 August 2014
Amount Requested	USD600,000
Unforeseen Need (250 words)	<p>Although potential departure of the UK from the ECHR was detected last year (and OSIFE budgeted accordingly), the deterioration of the situation has been faster than expected. The threat to British membership is a threat to the European Human Rights protection system, which is being questioned. Conservative Party figures have called for the Human Rights Act to be replaced with a “British Bill of Rights,” which – if recognized – is likely to be phrased more narrowly, and may be restricted to British citizens. If the UK leaves the ECHR, no judicial body capable of keeping the British parliament in check will exist: UK courts have no power to strike down primary legislation and the UK has no written constitution. British withdrawal from the ECHR would set a very dangerous precedent that other countries may well follow. The subject is central to our commitment to protect human rights in Europe, and OSF should become active in it.</p> <p>The grantee is a multi-donor initiative very well-known to OSF. They are not strong on campaigning, but they are the best position to understand British public opinion.</p> <p>Given that the UK will hold general elections in early May of 2015, the timing for this request is critical. TPI has to get the grant by September to be able to continue its grant making activities on a visible level. TPI will have to use the funds received from the Reserve Fund by the end of 2015.</p>
Activities Proposed (500 words)	The OSF programs will place a clear restriction on the use of the funds by TPI, which is that no part of this grant should be used to fund research. We would like to see the funds from this Request used on advocacy and campaigning activities related to the UK/ECHR problem. TPI has indicated four target areas, where the funds from this request would allow TPI to significantly expand the scale and the reach of campaigns and activities:

	<p>A) Supporting a series of targeted thematic campaigns to reframe and reposition human rights</p> <p>In addition to its ongoing support for Equally Ours, an online campaign to protect the HRA, TPI will support Equally Ours to collaborate with at least two major NGOs to run focused thematic human rights campaigns, applying the evidence and methodologies developed by TPI funded research in 2012 and 2013. These are likely to be in the fields of mental health, social care, older people, disability rights or children's rights, as TPI is keen to support projects which demonstrate that the HRA is not only protecting the rights of prisoners and terrorists, as large part of the public believes.</p> <p>B) Promoting accurate reporting and characterisation of human rights protection mechanisms</p> <p>TPI will, subject to a scoping study regarding the most effective approach, strengthen or establish a rapid response mechanism to promote accurate characterisation and reporting of the HRA, the ECHR and the ECtHR by politicians and media outlets.</p> <p>C) UK human rights network development and alliance building</p> <p>TPI will continue to invest in the development of and collaboration between the UK's human rights NGO networks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, including a second year grant to the Human Rights Consortium Scotland. TPI will also invite the UK human rights networks to bring forward proposals for a national conference and for the development and articulation of a collective position on the future of the HRA and the UK's position regarding the ECHR.</p> <p>D) An open call to 'make some noise' regarding the future of human rights protection in the UK</p> <p>TPI will issue a targeted call for proposals inviting the human rights sector to propose innovative initiatives aimed at raising the noise level over traditional and social media and in public debate, regarding the potential threat to the protection of human rights in the UK (and as a consequence to human rights protection in Europe and internationally). The call will encourage collaboration between human rights NGOs as well as the engagement of other support and expertise (for example, professional public affairs or social marketing agencies).</p>
Statement of who within OSF would lead the work	The Thomas Paine Initiative is the sole grantee of this project. The planned activity is complementing what other grantees of OSIFE and the Human Rights Initiative are doing, and the work of OSEPI and the Justice Initiative advocacy teams. We would therefore be combining many of our strengths to address this fundamental threat to the most

	<p>effective international system of human rights protection.</p> <p>OSF staff have been working on the ECHR issue for a year, and there is a high degree of coordination between the four programs involved. The directors of all four programs involved have been in touch with different players in Britain, but each program has devoted one person to closely follow the ECHR issue in Britain: Rupert Skilbeck from OSJI, Israel Butler from OSEPI, Borislav Petranov from HRI and Balazs Dénes from OSIFE. Debora Guidetti from OSIFE managed the grant to TPI in the past; Israel Butler from OSEPI has represented OSF in TPI meetings; Justice Initiative has produced materials showing the importance of the Court for a British audience; HRI has been approached by a number of external players about what to do. So the need for coordination is huge and growing, and we are addressing it.</p>
<p>Contribution s expected from various units within OSF and essential partners or grantees (250 words)</p>	<p>While OSIFE executes other activities on the UK-ECHR issue, increasing the funds for human rights (HR) activists/organizations and to other groups challenging the current UK's agenda on the ECHR/ECtHR is critical. The most reliable tool for distributing funding is the grantee, Thomas Paine Initiative (TPI), a donor platform hosted by the organization 'Global Dialogue'. Established in 2012, TPI is a collaborative donor project to promote public support for HR and the values underlying the ECHR in the UK.</p> <p>TPI is well placed to carry this work. Should OSF put money into a re-granting vehicle? Is it an appropriate use of reserves, especially if funds will not be granted to ultimate recipients in 2014? The TPI multi-donor effort allows for strict earmarking of the contribution, using the funding for the precise task of funding campaigning and advocacy aiming to protect ECHR and HR in the election campaign in which HR will be a direct target. The elections are in Spring 2015, with most funds to be re-granted between October and February.</p> <p>Although OSF funds would change the balance in TPI, OSF's contribution is going to an immediate campaign, rather than long-term sustainability or generally funding TPI. The surge in funding would not support building a larger, permanent infrastructure for TPI.</p> <p>Our proposal is not 'placing funds with a re-granter' nor is it building a stronger organization out of TPI. The plan is to have a hands-on approach. Under these conditions, working through TPA is the best available balance between legitimacy, collaboration with other donors and a broad array of actors, and OSF's ability to shape the actual campaign and activities.</p>

